

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A computerized method of tracking and using first and second point-to-credit conversion rates to converting respectively a user's first and second loyalty program award points to system-wide credits , said method comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining the number of loyalty program award points awarded to a user under the first and second loyalty programs, the first loyalty program points differing in value from the second loyalty program points;

(b) using the first and second point-to-credit conversion rates to converting respectively the user's first and second loyalty program award points into system-wide credits, each of the system-wide credits being of a common value;

(c) providing to the user on-line access to at least one ~~retailer~~ vendor that provides discounts for its products and/or services based on the number of system-wide credits that a user has;

(d) ~~ealeulating~~ enabling the vendor to determine for each of its products and/or services the number of system-wide credits required for the user to select and acquire the selected one of the vendor's products and/or services, and the amount of the discount off of the price of the selected one of the products or services ~~for which the user is eligible~~; and

(e) enabling the vendor to applying the discount to the price of the one of the products or services purchased selected by the user if the user has accumulated at least the number of system-wide credits set by the vendor.

2. (cancelled)
3. (cancelled)
4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)
6. (cancelled)
7. (cancelled)
8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of updating the ~~balance~~ number of the user's system-wide credits after the purchase of a product and/or service by the user.
9. (cancelled)
10. (cancelled)
11. (cancelled)
12. (cancelled)
13. (cancelled)
14. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further including the step of displaying the current ~~status~~ number of the user's ~~users'~~ system-wide credits to the user.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of updating the ~~award~~ number of the points of at least one of the user's first and second loyalty programs.

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (currently amended) The method of claim [1] 33 including the further steps of providing the information regarding the products and/or services for sale to the user via communication with the one ~~retailer~~ vendor of the products or services.

19. (cancelled)

20. (currently amended) The method of claim [1] 33 including the further step of allowing the user to register with at least one of the plurality of loyalty programs as a member via an on-line registration form.

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) The method of claim [1] 33 wherein the step of converting the user's award points into the system-wide credits comprises calculating from the user's award points in ~~one~~ each of the first and second loyalty programs a proportionate number of the system-wide credits.

23. (currently amended) A computerized system for managing a plurality of loyalty programs utilizing the internet to accumulate the award points issued by the plurality

of loyalty programs and to redeem the award points for items as selected by a user, the award points of at least one of the plurality of loyalty programs differing in value from the award points of another loyalty program of the plurality, said system comprising:

- a) means for converting the user's award points issued by the plurality of loyalty programs into system-wise credit, each credit being of a common value;
- b) a credits database for storing the balance of each of the system-wide credits for each user associated with at least one of the plurality of loyalty programs;
- c) ~~an~~ a first interactive communication ~~link~~ means connected to said credits database; each of the plurality of loyalty programs to which the user is associated;
- d) ~~an~~ a second interactive communication ~~link~~ means connected to at least one of ~~the~~ a plurality of vendors of the items offered to the user to enable the user to select at least one of the items; and
- e) ~~a terminal for each of the plurality of~~ means for enabling the one vendors ~~for facilitating its vendor~~ to access via said first interactive communication means at least one of the balances of the system-wide credits stored in ~~the~~ said credits database, whereby the one vendor can control the ~~applicability~~ number of the one user's balance of system-wide credits ~~for~~ that is required to enable a transaction involving the acquiring of selected items offered to the one user ~~for the one user's balance of the system-wide credits~~.

24. (cancelled)

25. (currently amended) The computerized system of claim 23 further comprising a plurality of interactive communication ~~links~~ means connected to at least one of the plurality of vendors for distributing to the user the items offered for exchange by the one vendor to a plurality of products and/or services that the member is permitted to purchase.

26. (previously presented) The computerized method of claim 1, wherein the user is enabled to receive loyalty program award points from a selected one of the plurality of loyalty programs.

27. (currently amended) The computerized system of claim 23, wherein there is included means for enabling the user ~~is enabled~~ to select the number of system-wide credits from each of the loyalty programs and to redeem the items as selected by the user.

28. (currently amended) The computerized system of ~~in~~ claim 23, wherein there is included a plurality of loyalty program databases, each database associated with a corresponding one of the plurality of loyalty programs and includes a plurality of files, each file storing a point balance for a corresponding one of the users.

29. (previously presented) The computerized system of claim 23, wherein the vendor is enabled to determine whether a user's transaction is eligible to be exchanged for system-wide credits.

30. (currently amended) The computerized system of claim 23, wherein ~~the~~ there is included means for enabling each of the plurality of vendors ~~is enabled~~ to determine the number of system-wide credits for which an item is eligible to be exchanged.

31. (currently amended) The computerized system of claim 23, wherein there are means to enable the vendor ~~is enabled to calculate~~ determine the number of system-wide credits that are required to achieve a desired discount for the user.

32. (currently amended) The computerized system of claim 23, wherein there is included a user terminal for displaying to the user the number of credits needed to satisfy a transaction proposed by the user.

33. (new) A computerized method of tracking and using first and second points-to-credits conversion rates to convert respectively a user's first and second loyalty points to system-wide credits, each system-wide credit being of a common value, whereby the user can select and request at least one item offered by at least one vendor, said method comprising the steps of:

a) obtaining the number of loyalty program award points awarded to a user under each of the first and second loyalty programs, the first loyalty program points differing in value from the second loyalty program points;

b) using the first and second points-to-credit conversion rates to convert respectively the user's first and second loyalty program award points to system-wide credits;

c) transmitting to the one vendor a request from the user for the one requested item; and

d) enabling the one vendor in its sole discretion to respond to the item request to determine the amount of a discount from the cost of the requested item independent of the number of system-wide credits accumulated by the user.

34. (new) The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of enabling the one vendor to determine for each of its items the predetermined number of system-wide credits required to permission the user to request the corresponding item.

35. (new) The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of enabling the one vendor in its sole judgment to set the predetermined number of system-wide credits required to permission the user to request the corresponding item.

36. (new) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of enabling the vendor to access the number of system-wide credits accumulated by the user and, if the number of system-wide credits accumulated by the user is not less than the predetermined number of system-wide credits, permissioning the one vendor to enable the user to transmit to the one vendor the user's request for the corresponding item.

37. (new) The method of claim 36, further comprising the step of applying the predetermined discount to the price of the one item selected by the user.